



News Release

Rhode Island District Office

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Small Business Administration and the Department of Commerce to Salute a Rhode Island Business Owner During National Minority Enterprise Development Week

Providence, RI – The U.S. Small Business Administration has named the owner of a Central Falls financial services firm the *2003 Rhode Island and New England Minority Small Business Person of the Year* for superior business achievements. The Regional award will be presented to William Sanchez, owner of William's Financial Services, Inc. during the 21st Anniversary celebration of the National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week conference on September 28-October 1 in Washington, D.C., at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. MED Week is cosponsored by the SBA and the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

William's Financial Services, located at 661 Dexter Street in Central Falls, RI, provides bookkeeping, tax preparation, payroll, and business planning services. Sanchez established his company in 1992 working primarily with the Spanish-speaking community. Today, the company not only serves clients in Rhode Island, but also provides services to clients in Boston and New York. The company now has 6 full-time and 2 part-time employees. Sanchez was able to grow his business with the assistance of an SBA-backed loan from Fleet Bank.

Sanchez is one of 10 minority-owned small business owners from around the country eligible for selection as the *National Minority Small Business Person of the Year*.

"The National MED Week Conference has always provided a unique forum to address the major issues affecting the growth and development of minority businesses," SBA Administrator Hector V. Barreto said. "This year's conference will continue to honor minorities and women who have demonstrated leadership and outstanding accomplishments through their hard work and determination."

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MED Week, held annually since 1983, recognizes minority businesses' contributions to the nation's economy. In his proclamation this year, President Bush urged all Americans to join together in honoring minority entrepreneurs across the country in appropriate observances.

"MED week is a symbol of achievement and success and is a testimonial to the hard work and dedication of all small business owners, both here in Rhode Island and nationwide," said SBA's Regional Administrator Jeffrey Butland. "William Sanchez is an inspiration to anyone who is already in business or wishes to start one and he embodies just what the SBA has stood for for more than 50 years."

The Rhode Island Minority Enterprise Development Week celebration is scheduled December 1-5, 2003. The celebration will include a minority business expo, networking reception, awards dinner, and a series of free professional development workshops.

"I am pleased that the SBA has played a role in Mr. Sanchez's growth and prosperity," said Mark S. Hayward, Director of the SBA Rhode Island District Office. "William's Financial Services is a successful small business that has created jobs and is making a contribution to the state's economy."

The conference will feature forums on international trade, the MED Week 2003 Business Expo as well as a panel moderated by the SBA to discuss proven strategies to maximize federal procurement opportunities. There also will be award ceremonies to honor minority entrepreneurs, minority business advocates and leaders in the corporate community.

Sanchez is scheduled to attend the National MED Week conference and will accept his award during the closing gala on the evening of October 1st.

For more information, contact the MED Week 2003 office at 1-877-MEDWEEK or visit the Web site at www.medweek.gov.

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